

# BEIJING TODAY

## METRO



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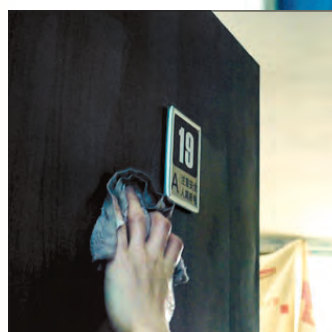
# Big dreams in a little box

Soaring rent and stagnant wages have forced a generation of young workers into some of the most cramped living quarters ever conceived.

Large apartments throughout the city are being sectioned off with flimsy walls to create 3- to 10-square-meter boxes that rent for less than 1,000 yuan per month.

2306, a new documentary by Tsinghua students Ke Yongquan and Hou Jiaxi, explores the lives of four young men in one such duplex.

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## Wuhao design shop unveils its fall lineup

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## Hammer falls on black market plates

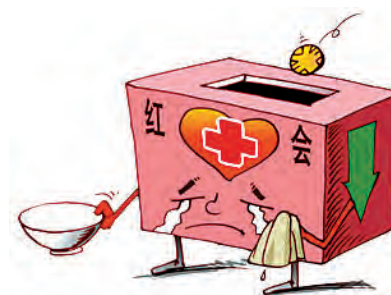
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## Year's last exhibitions begin at UCCA

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## Scandals decimate 2013 charity funding

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# Charity report draws attention to collapse of donor faith

By Zhao Hongyi

Total cash and goods donations in China fell to 81.7 billion yuan in 2012.

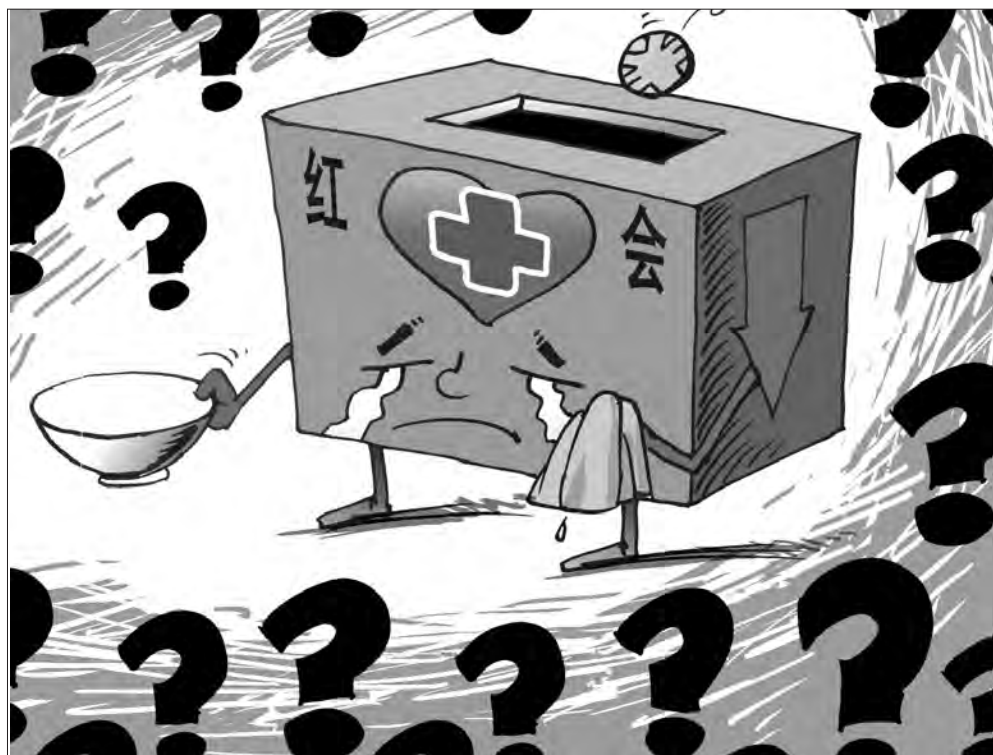
The year marks the second consecutive drop in China's charitable activities, according to the China Charity and Donation Information Center, the sole responsible institute under the Ministry of Civil Affairs.

Donations fell 3.3 percent from 2011, which itself fell 18 percent from 2010.

The center attributed the drop to global economic depression, a decrease in natural disasters and several scandals that shook the public's faith in many donation channels.

"In 2011 we saw fewer natural disasters, and the scandals involving China's charities clearly influenced our business," said Liu Youping, deputy director of the information center.

A girl named Guo Meimei, purportedly the general man-



The Red Cross is losing donations on account of damaged reputation.

BYD Photo

ager of the Red Cross Business Group, ran a series of blog posts showing off her luxury goods in 2011. The

series decimated public trust in the Chinese Red Cross.

"Charity is a business built on one's reputation and trust,"

said Xu Jianzhong, deputy director of Social Welfare and Charity Promotion of the Ministry of Civil Affairs. "A loss of

trust in charity organizers will absolutely crush our business."

Xu said it might take years to rebuild the reputation of China's charities.

Government institutes are the major recipients of donations, accounting for more than 70 percent of all donations nationwide.

Various national charities collected 30.6 billion yuan, while grassroots groups brought in another 26.9 billion yuan. The government's civil affairs bodies accounted for another 13.3 billion yuan.

The report singled out the China Red Cross, noting that it received only 2.2 billion yuan: 23.7 percent less than the previous year.

Religious groups, party organizations and social bodies have also seen a decrease in charitable activity.

In 2012, China's donations by overseas parties also fell 7.9 percent to 6.4 billion yuan. However, the drop was less than the 14 percent drop seen in 2011.

## Mother gets life in prison for toddlers' death

By Zhao Hongyi

A mother who abandoned her daughters to die of hunger while she went on a trip with her lover has been sentenced to life in prison.

Le Yan, who is in her early 20s, had been living together with her boyfriend Li Wenbing, the toddlers' father, in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province for the last year.

On February 27, Li was arrested and sentenced to six months in prison for selling methamphetamine, which both the couple were addicted.

After the conviction, Le purchased and left two bottles of milk and three pies on the table of her rented home before locking the girls inside and leaving.

She spent the next two months using drugs, playing online games and sleeping with her lover while Li Mengxue, 2, and Li Tong, 1, starved to death inside.

By the time neighbors contacted the authorities the girls were already dead.

Le herself was abandoned by her mother soon after birth



Le Yan is now serving a life sentence.

CFP Photo

and raised by her grandparents until she turned 16. After that, she left home.

She is currently pregnant with a third child.

The court found that Le abandoned her two daughters with the intent to kill them. However, she was sentenced to life in prison rather than death on account of her current pregnancy.

Li, who was recently released from prison, was shocked to learn Le had abandoned their daughters to die.

Wang Jun, a professor of social science at Peking University, said the case is symptomatic of a generation still coming to grips with the collapse of the Maoist nanny state and the difficulties involved in child rearing.



## Buses seek niche markets to survive

By Zhao Hongyi

The city has opened two new microbus routes: Lines 11 and 12. The 8-meter buses are used to move traffic between 16 communities and alleviate pedestrian traffic.

The buses cost the same as other public buses and have 29 seats.

Line 11 runs along a 5-kilometer stretch, taking 14 minutes to commute from end to end. Buses arrive every 6 minutes and 30 seconds. Line 12 is slightly longer, taking 24 minutes to complete its 11 stations.

"It's really convenient," said passengers in the Cuigu Community. "It will be better if they send more buses to shorten the wait time."

Cuigu Community is located near Babaoshan Cemetery. Residents for-

merly had to travel 25 minutes by foot to reach the nearest metro station: the microbus lines make the connection possible in fewer than three minutes.

Beijing is expanding its subway network to include more than 1,000 kilometers of track by 2020.

The ongoing subway expansion has reduced the need for many of the city's older bus lines.

Public transportation companies are seeking alternative markets to make full use of their bus fleet. New microbus lines and community transportation networks are one of their fastest areas of growth.

Several companies are pushing bus chartering services that allow low-cost bus rental for weddings, funerals and other gatherings.



# Jumbled laws spawn black trade in plates and cars



Police could find no goods worth confiscating when they raided Shi Guangyu's home.

BYD Photo

By Zhao Hongyi

An entire black market has grown up in the confusion over when Beijing's cars and license plates expire or who can qualify to own a car or get a plate. The proprietors are typically rural residents looking for easy money and a chance to make use of their Beijing residency.

Since the government instituted its queue and raffle system for plates in 2010, the demand has grown ever hotter.

Desperate to reign in violators and collect millions of yuan in unpaid fines, the Beijing Traffic Bureau offered a final grace period this month in hopes of learning who is driving which cars.

The penalties could be harsh for anyone still involved in the black market for vehicles come October.

## Lure of the market

Ten years ago, Shi Lanfen became bored with life as an unemployed woman in rural Beijing. She left the suburbs to explore an emerging black market in used vehicles and license plates.

Unclear about the legalities and responsibilities involved in vehicle ownership, Shi, then 34, began acting as an intermediary to procure license plates for drivers who were ineligible for vehicle ownership in the capital.

Shi would aid her customers, most of whom were from other provinces, in completing the Beijing registration procedures using her ID.

Within a decade she had registered more than 8,000 vehicles under her name. Each vehicle brought her about 500 yuan.

Shi's business arose due to an odd conflict in the law that bans cars older than eight years from Beijing's roads but allows their plates to remain valid.

Working within this gray area, Shi established herself as the car kingpin. By 2005 her rates became the industry standard. Business was booming.

But several years later, Shi

began receiving fines from the traffic administration.

"I was informed I owed more than 3 million yuan in unpaid fines," Shi said.

Her clients, many of whom were flagrantly violating traffic laws or driving cars long after their expiration, were racking up bills in her name.

In 2006, the national traffic bureau announced that all vehicles must be registered under the name of the actual drivers. When Shi received many calls from old customers asking to borrow her name for their plates, she found yet another way to earn money.

Clients who wanted to make use of her ID card paid her with 800 yuan plus a dinner. The new business earned her more than 120,000 yuan.

In 2009, she was arrested and sentenced to three years in prison. At the time of her arrest she had more than 3,500 plates left to sell.

## Inspiring 'success'

Comparatively speaking, Shi Guangyu was a newcomer to the market.

His friends introduced him the underground business in 2003. The pitch was hard to

pass up: collect money without working in exchange for lending your ID card to anyone who needs to register a vehicle.

It was safe as long as the vehicle did not become tangled in any legal issues.

Two years later, after consulting his contacts in the police, Shi decided to enter the market.

But without strong connections in the market it was difficult to find eager drivers looking to make use of Shi's ID. He put the word out to his friends and began charging 20, 30 or 50 yuan for each vehicle he registered.

The low price brought in a flood of business – especially when he undercut the prices set by such black market giants as Shi Lanfen.

In August he ran into trouble: 10 of the vehicles he helped to register were actually expired and he was deprived of the right to register more plates. He began working as a model for art schools to make a living.

When a government investigation revealed how many vehicles were registered under his name he became ineligible for the welfare he was previously

collecting.

Shi was arrested in 2007 when a vehicle he registered caused a hit-and-run accident.

"The court's police showed up at my door with repo men to confiscate something as compensation. When they found I didn't actually own anything I was taken to prison for 15 days," he said.

The third major name in black market vehicle registrations is Wang Xiuxia, a Tianjin native. She helped to register more than 1,000 vehicles in Beijing a decade ago.

## Jumping ship

The third major name in black market vehicle registrations is Wang Xiuxia, a Tianjin native. She helped to register more than 1,000 vehicles in Beijing a decade ago.

Vehicles registered through a black market intermediary would be given a grace period in which to turn in their plates and reassign their existing plates to their proper owners: those who failed to comply would be slammed with any fines accrued by their clients.

Under the new Beijing license plate raffle system, even people who are not permanent residents of the city can apply

to get a plate. The decision to open the door turned a gray market business into a black market one.

Shi Lanfen said she had to abandon more than 2,700 plates that were in her sales queue. It took more than eight hours to sign off on all the paperwork at the police station.

The most recent brush with the law has motivated her to consider retirement.

Shi Guangyu abandoned 101 of his contracts to the police and exited the business.

However, Wang Xiuxia is missing. Police and friends have been unable to locate her in either Tianjin or Beijing.

"I know I was bending the law to earn money," Shi Lanfen said. "This was never a business you could depend on for very long."

New regulations limit all persons to having one vehicle registered under their name. With the Beijing market still locked by a raffle system, the price for plates has soared to more than 10,000 yuan.

"The risk in the business has become completely unstable," Shi Guangyu said. "It's time to find another job."

## Ullens Center unveils

By Zhao Hongyi

After a year of preparation, Ullens Center for Contemporary Art in 798 Art District is presenting its final three artist exhibitions of 2013.



Taryn Simon's bloodlin3 project



Tino Sehgal's interactive exhibition making



Tino Sehgal's work at previous exhibition



Wang Keping's "Untilted"

## Capturing interaction

Tino Sehgal is a 37-year-old artist working in Berlin who finds art in the daily interactions and exchanges of social life.

Sehgal's exhibition at UCCA will be his largest and most comprehensive in Asia, presenting works that span the continuum of his artistic practice from the choreographic to the discursive.

With its game-like quality, Sehgal's work invites visitors into unfamiliar situations that shift the parameters of the traditional exhibition. The viewer's interaction with the piece is a central component of its meaning with no two people having the same experience.

As his works rely heavily on framing and the language of movement and social interaction, each takes on an immaterial quality that is divorced from photographic conventions.

Through these encounters,



Tino Sehgal

Sehgal asks visitors to reflect upon their participation in the daily landscape. These questions are particularly powerful in China, a nation that has only recently shifted from an economy of scarcity to one of affluence.

For instance, in the exhibition, a number of curators interact with visitors asking them about what if progress and the negative and positive impacts brought by progress we have achieved so far.

The exhibition room has nothing but white walls, the curators and visitors walk through corridor and interact with each other on a certain topic.

The exhibition is sponsored by UCCA and the Goethe Institute

**Exhibition:** Tino Sehgal

**Date:** Now through November

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**Venue:** UCCA Great Hall

**Curators:** Paula Tsai and Biljana Ciric

Com  
s

The 64-year-old Wang Keping is one of China's foremost contemporary sculptors.

From his Beijing roots, Wang exploded onto the contemporary scene in the late 1970s alongside fellow artists Huang Rui, Ma Desheng and Ai Weiwei as a founding member of the contemporary group (Xing Xing), a major exponent of artistic freedom.

After living abroad for 30 years, Wang returned to present his largest exhibition work in the country to date.



# s final artists for 2013



es visitors a part of his creation.

Photo by Zhao Hongyi

## ntemporary sculpture



Wang Keping

The Stars  
ly propo-  
or nearly  
to China  
hibition of  
ate.

Wang Keping is supported by 10 Chancery Lane Gallery, Hong Kong.

**Exhibition:** Wang Keping  
**Date:** Now through January 5  
**Venue:** UCCA Central Gallery

## Inherited psychology

Taryn Simon was born in 1975 in New York. This exhibition, her largest ever in Asia, represents the culmination of a four-year globetrotting research project into 18 bloodlines.

In each of the work's eighteen chapters, the external forces of territory, power, circumstance and religion collide with the internal forces of psychological and physical inheritance.

Subjects span a wide range of topics and social relations: the titular Indian man whose relatives had him declared dead in official records to inherit his father's land; victims of the Bosnian Genocide, represented by the bones used to identify them; a group of Ukrainian orphans, united by their lack of discernible bloodline; and laboratory-bred rabbits in Australia used to test the efficacy



Taryn Simon

of a virus designed to eliminate their invasive presence.

Absent members are represented by blank portraits with captions listing the reason, covering everything from fear of abduction and imprisonment to Dengue Fever.

This exhibition comes to UCCA and to China after a series of shows in major institutions around the globe, including MoMA, MOCA Los Angeles, Tate Modern, Neue Nationalgalerie Berlin and the Corcoran Gallery of Art.

**Courtesy Gagosian Gallery**

**Exhibition:** Taryn Simon: A Living Man Declared Dead and Other Chapters I-XVIII

**Date:** Now through January 5

**Venue:** UCCA Long Gallery and Nave



Wang Keping's "Life"

Photos provided by UCCA

# 2306 explores the cramped lives of migrant professionals

By Annie Wei

With rent more expensive than ever, 2013 saw the creation of *qunzufang*.

The term refers to apartments modified for group rent: shabby constructions in which 20 to 30 young adults can get a bed for less than 1,000 yuan per month.

Such living conditions are common for young Chinese who come to the big city to chase their dreams. Affordable access to a bed near the office often trumps all notions of comfort.

It doesn't take a structural engineer to spot the problems with this model.

Paper thin walls that box off 3-meter cubes allow for little privacy – to say nothing of the battle for bathroom time.

The living arrangement inspired Ke Yongquan and Hou Jiaxi to shoot *2306*, a record of four tenants' lives in such a duplex. The film was their capstone project at the Tsinghua School of Journalism and Communication.

"It took much more time and effort to finish a documentary than write an essay," Ke and Hou said.

The apartment in the film is located by West Third Ring Road in a high-end compound. The interior is separated into three floors with compartments for 36 tenants.

The documentary explores why they opted for a group living arrangement and how it affects their dreams.

The film screened to wide applause at the school. It has recently been edited down to 40 minutes for the Phoenix TV video competition and the 5th Hangzhou Asian Film Festival 2013.

Although topics about *beipiao*, people who live and work in Beijing without hukou, are common, the film provides a fresh angle. The subjects' passion and candor is striking.

Hou said the conversations were easy, even when they turned to issues of relationship management and future plans.

To win the landlord's trust and get permission to film inside the house Ke moved into the smallest compartment, spending 700 yuan per month for 3 square meters.

Ke said many group rental operators do not actually own the homes they rent. The home he was filming was managed by a family from Anhui Province. The father makes his living as a kind of landlord middleman.

Ke said tenants were not allowed to use the kitchen to minimize the chance of a fire.

The documentary begins with Lu Sijin, who lives in "room" A1, a 12-square-meter slice of the apartment. Lu is from Harbin, Heilongjiang Province. He works as visual effects artist for a movie production company.

Lu rented another place from an illegal real estate agent before moving into this apartment. After being cheated, Lu damaged the apartment and moved into the group home.

The second subject is Li Si, who relocates from another group rental arrangement when the landlord's son decides to get married.

"Li's personality was very open. The same was true with Ke, who came to talk to him and let him follow him around with a camera," Hou, Ke's teammate said.

A third man, Yang Cheng, lives in B10. He complains

about how is compartment is hot in summer and cold in the winter. The room is separated from the balcony by a single pane of glass.

"Many of these apartments are dark and uncomfortable," Ke said. He picked the spot for the lighting, expecting to get plenty of warm sun.

"People's impression of the *qunzufang* is one of hardship, but life on the inside is a different experience," Ke said.

"There is no future for (many of) them in a city like Beijing, but many are happy and optimistic," Hou said.

"We hoped one of the characters could be female," Ke said. "However, the women living in *qunzufang* were very private."

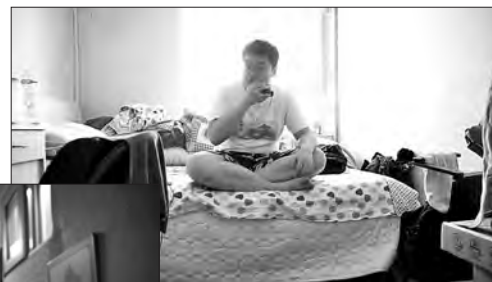
Hou's soundtrack for the film uses "Zhonggulou" by He Yong and "Tiankong Zhicheng" by Li Zhi.

The first people to view the finished *2306* were the film's subjects. Most laughed about seeing themselves on the screen.

The trailer shows a scene of four young men chatting and laughing while having kabobs and beer at a streetside restaurant.

"I was drinking with them at that time," Ke said. "When there were moments I wanted to record I just turned on the video."

"I hope to remain friends with the men so I can film a follow-up," he said.



A tenant's "room"



Inside apartment 2306



The four "neighbors" often hang out.



Footage of a tenant's daily life



Directors Ke Yongquan (left) and Hou Jiaxi  
Photos provided by Ke Yongquan





# Wuhao's autumn harvest in the magic garden

By Annie Wei

The curated-shop Wuhao recently hosted a Mid-Autumn Festival party to unveil its new fall items.

We recommend its new items like interesting rings by designer Wu Mian, jewelry from Elaine Ng and a funky installation.

You can also find new fashion collections by designers Yifang Wan, Ground Zero, Yangdu, Silent Voice and MPMP, as well as a huge golden rabbit by Christopher Raeburn.

## Wuhao

Where: 35, Mao'er Hutong, Dongcheng District

Open: RSVP

Tel: 18911355035

**M**ake Installation, produced in cooperation with Make Architecture, can be found at the entrance to Wuhao. Wuhao collected sentences from its visitors in a display designed to inspire them to "make" they want. The installation is a dialogue between the eyes and mind.



**W**u Mian, a 22-year-old graduate of the Central Academy of Fine Art, unveiled a new take on Start from a Ring, a series of jewelry designs she released last season.

The young designer's approach to mass produced jewelry has been praised for its beauty.

Her industrial jewelry manufacturing process uses a silicon mold and wax injection machine to produce standardized pieces, which are then used to create molds for lost wax casting.

Wu's project began with 100 copies of diamond ring. She selected five copies at random and used them to make press molds and began the process again.

After 10 repetitions, Wu had created a new abstract ring.

Wu said the process of error and accidental discovery mirrors the creation of new life.

For her 2013 series, Wu preserves her passion for the process but moves beyond her conceptual limitations. This year's pieces are created freely using selected models and presented in an easy, even ironic manner.

Each of the rings is unique and delicate.



**E**laine Ng Yanling is a London-born, Hong Kong based designer. Her Climatology series transforms interior decoration into more practical jewelry design, bringing high-tech and elegant design from the museums to the people. Her latest work brings new possibilities to the traditional concept of jewelry.



Photos provided by Wu Hao



# HiLa updates Sichuan hotpot with modern twist

By Annie Wei

Sichuan cuisine has created some of the most popular Chinese dishes in the world. In Beijing, Sichuan hotpot is the easiest option when asking your friends to dine out.

This week, *Beijing Today* visited the three-floor HiLa hotpot restaurant in Xiang'er Hutong, an alley behind the popular Tu'er renovation compound.

Alan Wang, co-owner of the restaurant, loves spicy Sichuan food. Before opening his restaurant he frequently visited Sichuan just for the food.

When he and his business partners decided to open an authentic hotpot restaurant, they spent a month in the southwestern province learning the secrets of its kitchens.

The right flavor requires more than cooking skills: it requires something that Sichuan locals are born with.



Homemade drinks (28 yuan)



HiLa is located in the Xiang'er Hutong



Inside the restaurant

"To have an authentic Sichuan hotpot, you have to hire a Sichuan chef," Wang said.

Wang brought in a chef with more than 20 years of experience and a team of waiters and waitresses from Sichuan.

HiLa provides many common Sichuan foods, as well as a few more unusual specialties like fresh goose and duck intestines, day lilies and a variety of Sichuan noodles.

The goose and duck intestines are imported from Jiuci town, Sichuan Province. The birds are raised in an area with clean water and lush plants so their meat tastes tender, clean and delicious.

Although Sichuan hotpot is infamous for reusing base soups, HiLa claims every pot is fresh. Wang said the kitchen begins preparing the base soup at 7 am to get it ready by lunch.

Dishes we recommended include stewed sour white

radish and duck soup (48 yuan), stewed pig feet (58 yuan) and HiLa's signature spicy fish (48 yuan). The fish is topped with a layer of chilies and boiled for three minutes at your table: it's boneless, tender and yummy!

We also liked the sparkling wine (198 yuan per bottle), which paired well with the pork tripe. The bubbles eased the spicy and strong flavor.

For people who are afraid that spices may be too much for their stomach, try starting with a glass of soy milk. The soymilk is Weita, a popular Sichuan brand. The homemade plum drink is also good, tasting cool, sour and sweet.

HiLa has a nice rooftop for romantic evening dining.

## HiLa Hotpot

Where: 112 Xiang'er Hutong, Dongcheng District  
Open: 11 am – late  
Tel: 5717 1110



Ingredients shipped from Sichuan Province

Photos provided by Hi La

## Wujiang Food Festival adds to the taste of Jiangsu Tourism

By Li Zhixin

The 11th Wujiang Food Festival and 2013 East Taihu Cultural Tourism Festival began September 20. The festival is hosted by the Wujiang District Government of Suzhou City and the Jiangsu Cuisine Association.

During the 27-day-long festival, tourists can enjoy famed Jiangsu steamed crabs and also experience a series of events including a Wujiang self-driving tour, the Tihu Yuwan Food Festival, Wujiang Chef Skills Contest, Suzhouwan Beer Festival, Happy Life Blinding Dating event and Food Cultural Forum.

Wujiang, which borders Shanghai on the east, is the newest and biggest district of Suzhou. Before it became a

district last September it was ranked one of China's Top 10 cities for its comprehensive economical capacity and innovative ability.

Wujiang is known as the Venice of the East because it is crisscrossed by rivers, canals and lakes. Its abundant water occupies 23 percent of the land area. Its principal water resources include the Suzhou and Xitang rivers, Lakes Taihu and Taipu, as well as canals, which provide handy and fast water transportation.

As a traditional agricultural district, Wujiang has become a popular tourist destination with a booming economy. Its IT, silk textile, equipment manufacturing, new energy, new material and bio-tech industries are among the

nation's strongest.

In order to boost tourism, Wujiang forged four tourism brands to attract more tourists: Ancient Water Town Tour, Ecological Leisure Tour, Food and Business Tour and Silk Culture Tour.

Tongli Town, Tuisi Garden, Jingsi Garden – known for its marvelous natural stone collection – and Xiaodian Lake Forest Park are Wujiang's tourism name cards.

Lying on the eastern bank of the Lake Taihu, Tongli Town is a distinguished water town and is a Cultural and Historical Town of Jiangsu Province.

It is listed as a must-see site for tourists.

The town is separated by 15 rivers that create seven islands connected by 49 ancient bridges.

